

Congressman Childers Announces Recovery Act Funds for North Mississippi Military Operations, Veteran

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Act Allocates Recovery Funds for Columbus AFB and VA, \$250 Payment to Veterans

March 23, 2009

Washington, DC - The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has allocated significant funds to benefit the VA and military operations in North Mississippi, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) announced today.

Columbus AFB and Columbus Auxiliary Airfield have received \$6.6 million in Recovery Act Funds from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) for repairs. Mississippi will also receive millions of dollars in funding for Non-Recurring Maintenance (NRM) projects and National Cemetery maintenance projects, including funds for VA Medical Centers in Jackson, MS, Memphis, TN, and Tuscaloosa, AL, which serve veterans in the First District. In addition, the VA will make a one-time payment of \$250 to eligible veterans and survivors to mitigate the effects of the current economy.

"North Mississippi's veterans and active duty men and women deserve top notch facilities, and have earned the best benefits available," said Congressman Childers. "These Recovery Act funds will provide necessary repairs to air force bases, medical centers, and other important facilities to meet the needs of our veterans and armed services men and women. They will also give much-needed relief to those who have honorably protected our nation and our freedoms."

Through the DoD, the Recovery Act will fund approximately 3,000 military construction and facility improvement projects. The \$5.9 billion budget for these construction and repair projects represents the bulk of the approximately \$7.4 billion in defense-related funding provided by the Recovery Act.

The VA has also received \$1.4 billion dollars from the Recovery Act, which is being targeted to improve medical facilities and national cemeteries, provide grants to assist states in acquiring or constructing state nursing homes and domiciliaries, and to remodel, modify or alter existing facilities to care for veterans. These funds will also be used to hire and train temporary claims processors, and to pursue needed information technology initiatives.

Below is a list of funds for NRM projects that benefit Mississippi:

City

Project Title

Total Project Cost

Biloxi

Replace Elevators in Building 2&19

\$1,300,000

Biloxi

Repair/Replace Elevators and Dumbwaiters on Building 1 & 3

\$2,200,000

Biloxi

Replace Building 5 Roof & Update Exterior finish

\$1,120,000

Biloxi

Renovate/Upgrade Building 17 Interior for American Disability Act accessibility

\$820,000

Jackson

Provide Back-Up Generator Capacity

\$4,700,000

Jackson

Replace Medical Center Windows - Phase 1

\$2,000,000

Jackson

Clean and Recoat portions of Existing Room on Building 1 & 7

\$300,000

Memphis

Renovate for Cat Scanner and Ultrasound

\$969,973

Memphis

Repair and Upgrade Medical Gas System

\$668,000

Memphis

Construct Intensive Care Unit Family Waiting Rooms

\$280,000

Memphis

Replace Water Cooled Condensers

\$246,000

Tuscaloosa

Modernize Halls and Floors

\$500,000

Tuscaloosa

Replace Windows

\$905,000

Tuscaloosa

Replace Elevators

\$705,000

Tuscaloosa

Upgrade Quality Management and Pharmacy

\$1,072,041

Tuscaloosa

Upgrade Cabling and Telephone Closets

\$4,980,000

Below is a list of funds for National Cemetery maintenance projects in Mississippi:

City

Description

Est. Cost

Biloxi

National Cemetery Memorial, 1941

\$100,000

Biloxi

Tamper

\$3,400

Biloxi

Mini Truck

\$10,000

Natchez

Utility Vehicle

\$25,000

Regarding the one-time payment of \$250 to eligible veterans and survivors, the VA estimates \$700 million in payments will be made, with payments beginning in June 2009.

To be eligible for the \$250 payment, VA beneficiaries must have received compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, or spina bifida benefits at any time between November 2008 and January 2009. No application is necessary. The VA will use its existing payment records to determine eligibility to the \$250 payment.

Beneficiaries will receive their payments in the same way (either by direct deposit or mail) they receive their monthly VA benefits. VA will inform beneficiaries and the public when releasing the payments. This payment is not countable in determining eligibility for VA pension or Parents' DIC. The Internal Revenue Service cannot tax this payment.

The law allows only one \$250 payment per individual. VA beneficiaries who also receive benefits from the Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board will be paid through those agencies, and will therefore not receive the payment from VA.

For more information on the First District's and Mississippi's share of Recovery Act funds, visit Congressman Childers' North Mississippi Recovery Tracker at <http://www.childers.house.gov/>.

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